

## Cows on line delay trains

● COWS on the line near Benfleet train station caused delays for passengers travelling between Shoeburyness and Pitsea.

The worst affected service yesterday was the 9.06am from Shoeburyness to Fenchurch Street, delayed by 40 minutes.

The cattle, thought to have broken through a fence, found their way on to the line between Leigh and Benfleet. They were cleared by Network Rail staff by 10am.

## Family fun in the park

● A FAMILY fun event is being held in Southchurch Park today from 11am until 3pm.

There will be interactive stalls, face-painting, inflatables, balloon-modelling, arts and crafts, badge-making, and fingerprinting on offer.

More than 5,000 people are expected to attend Stay Safe '09. The event is organised by the Turning Tides team of community wardens to highlight safety measures.

## Butterfly man's talk

● SOUTH Essex Natural

# Travellers ditch Euro court eviction appeal

By JON AUSTIN

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TRAVELLERS will not take their battle against eviction to the European Court of Human Rights.

The decision is the first sign hundreds of people at Dale Farm, Crays Hill, may move peacefully – but only if another site is found.

Grattan Puxon, lead campaigner, said: "We are keen to continue negotiations to find out how the council plans to meet requirements to identify 62 new caravan pitches."

❑ Dale Farm residents may move on peacefully  
❑ Campaigners keen to negotiate with council

Letecia Osorio, of the Swiss-based Centre on Housing Rights and Forced Eviction, was preparing an appeal to the European court, which has been put on ice.

She said: "Referring the case to Europe is a possibility that shall be used only if Basildon Council fails to find an alternative solution to forced eviction, be it maintaining the community at Dale

Farm, or providing for relocation. "Now we have to give the council a chance to present its proposal and to do something to resolve the situation. We are confident an amicable solution can be reached to avoid a forced eviction."

However, time could be running out as the council has begun hiring bailiffs and has not met with travellers since early July.

It has also ruled out a site suggested by Mr Puxon in Freebournes Road, Witham, as an alternative.

A council source warned: "As soon as the bailiffs are hired, the negotiating will cease and they

will be sent in if people haven't moved off by choice."

However, Mr Puxon said: "We have written requesting the next meeting soon. The council had not ruled out our suggestion of land swaps for individual families within the district."

Council leader Tony Ball and Billericay MP John Baron are still waiting to hear if the Government will answer their plea to find temporary land outside Basildon to avoid eviction.

Mr Ball was unavailable for comment, but has previously said the council would help travellers move if alternatives can be found.

## EMERGENCY WORKER GETS ON HIS BIKE TO SAVE LIVES

